THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) In view of reply to part (a), question does not arise.

Concessions for bulk mailing of commercial articles

401. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have offered concessions for bulk mailing of commercial articles through bulk-mail counters;

(b) if so, what is the rationale behind extending such concessions; and

(c) whether Government propose to consider enforcing a two-slab system of postal tarif-one for the public at the existing subsidised rates and the other for commercial trade community on actual cost basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) A rebate is now given at Bulk Mail Centres when pre-sorted letters commercial or otherwise of a specified minimum number are presented for posting.

(b) when bulk mail is presented in a pre-stored condition, there is a saving on staff costs in the posting office and mail can also be despatched expeditiously.

(c) There is no such proposal at present. However, in so far as postcards are concerned, a higher rate for postcards containing printing communication as compared to other postcards is already in force.

Programmes sponsored for rural telephones

402. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Three Indian Groups of Telecom companies are separately sponsoring a programme for rural telehones; and

(b) if so, the details therof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

Participation of Private Sector Companies for improvement of Telecommunications

403. SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to include Private Sector for the improvement of telecommunications in the country;

(b) if so, whether any package of financial incentives has been recommended;

(c) is so, whether the Private Sector has urged Government that the package should be on the same pattern as that of four projects; and

(d) if so, how many private sector companies have come forward for the development of telecommunications in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) There are certain proposals in this regard which are under consideration of the Government.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.